

Berkshire District Attorney's Office

Bullying Prevention Initiative

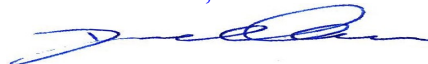
Educator Newsletter

Spring 2015

Dear Educator:

This newsletter is intended to support your efforts in creating a positive school climate by providing you with information on prevention programs and activities that are current and relevant to students' own life experiences. We look to research and evidence-based approaches to promote school climate change including mentorship, positive role models, supportive peer groups, and interactive teaching methods. We hope you find the information useful and that the research, lesson plans and resources support your efforts to sustain a welcoming and creative learning environment.

Best wishes,



David F. Capeless

Youth Advisory Board Hosts 2015 STRIVE Conference

The fourth annual STRIVE (Students Teaching Respect Integrity Values and Equality) Youth Leadership Conference was hosted by the District Attorney's Office Youth Advisory Board on Thursday, April 9th. Eighteen public and private Berkshire County middle schools sent students to the Crowne Plaza in Pittsfield to participate.

The Berkshire District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board, created in 2008, engages high school students to lend their voices and ideas to youth focused initiatives in order to strengthen the prevention message and develop deeper connection with the students being served.

The Board serves as a vehicle to enable the Office to better address the critical risk factors affecting youth across the County and develops and administers prevention projects tailored to support students in making positive decision.

The first STRIVE Youth Leadership Conference was hosted four years ago by the 2010 – 2011 Board, which had the idea to bring middle school students from all over Berkshire county to discuss teen social issues.

The conference is such a positive experience, not only for the 170 middle school students who participated but also for the Youth Advisory Board members who plan the day, that it has become the annual year-long project for the Board.

The day-long conference was created by the Youth Advisory Board to educate their younger peers on social issues impacting teens. Featured presentations included:

- **Growing Strong Roots for Leadership** – An interactive workshop to help



students map their future by realizing who they are as leaders. Presented by Kim Boland, Miss Hall's School.

- **Dynamic Influence** – Using magic and illusions to educate students on social media dangers, what to look for, and how to post responsibly. Presented by Robert Hackenson.
- **Drug Awareness Seminar** – Discussion on street and prescription drugs and the risks and consequences associated with drug use and abuse. Presented by members of the Berkshire Law Enforcement Task Force.
- **LGBT Allyship: Supporting Your Peers** – Presented by Jess McDonald, a

graduate student and member of Campus Pride at UMass Amherst.

- **Planting Seeds for Success in High School** – Discussion led by the District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board on navigating the transition from middle school to high school.
- **Safe & Healthy Relationships** – An interactive workshop exploring teen relationships led by members of the District Attorney's staff.
- **Taylor's Message: Underage Drinking Awareness** – An alcohol awareness program from the heart. Presented by Kathi Sullivan.
- **Not In the Playbook: A Journey Through Addiction and Recovery**. Presented by former NFL player Chris Sullivan.

During lunch students were entertained by the Highland Band, a group of local youths playing old school music revamped with a fresh, youthful feeling. Students attendees had the opportunity to ask these talented young artists about how they got started and the creative process of making music.

The day not only provided critical prevention information but also offered students tools to support positive behavior and build resiliency.



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Federal Resources Released After Bullying Prevention Summit

The fourth Federal Bullying Prevention Summit, Keeping Kids Safe: Opportunities and Challenges in Bullying Prevention, was held August 15, 2015, in Washington, DC.

The agenda included experts in the field who addressed topics including bullying prevention research, multi-tiered behavioral frameworks, and cyberbullying and school discipline.

Attendees shared challenges faced by schools and communities in bullying prevention, successes in promoting positive school climate and the need to bring additional partners to the table including parents and medical professionals.

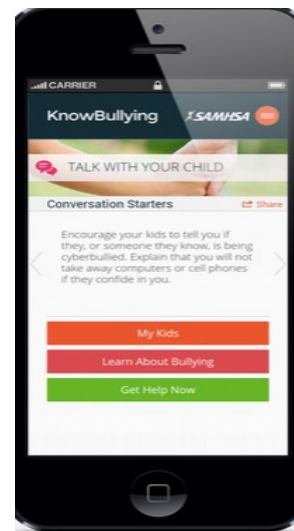
The day included a powerful workshop featuring youth from across the United States who offered their perspectives on bullying, sharing not only their personal

experiences but also the work they were doing in their communities to combat the behaviors. These students provided a valuable component to the day as they were able to connect the dots between research practice and what youth experience in school.

The day also highlighted the launch of two Federal bullying prevention resources. The resources developed by the US Department of Education and Justice and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration include a video for educators entitled [Bullying, Harassment and Civil Rights: An Overview of School District Federal Obligation to Respond to Harassment](#) and the KnowBullying app that helps parents/caregivers talk with kids about bullying.

For more information visit <http://store.samhsa.gov/apps/bullying/>

The app is available for download from both Google and Apple.



To view all of the summit resources along with speaker's presentations click here:

stopbullying.gov

How Did You Highlight No-Name Calling Week 2015?

We would like to highlight our local schools' awareness activities and projects for No-Name Calling Week this past January 19 - 23 in our next newsletter.

We hope that this will encourage schools to begin thinking about No-Naming Calling Week 2016 with ideas and inspiration. Please submit your

week's highlights to: carol.a.mulcahy@state.ma.us



**celebrate
KINDNESS**

GLSEN

**NO NAME-CALLING WEEK
2016: January 18-22**

Preventing LGBT Bullying: Live Out Loud Community Conference

Time and time again surveys have showed that LGBT students are victimized more often and more intensely than their straight peers.

Findings from the [GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey](#) demonstrate that Massachusetts schools were not safe for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) secondary school students. 58% experienced verbal harassment based on their sexual orientation and 46% based on their gender expression. 50% regularly heard negative remarks about transgendered people. 58% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school never reported it to school staff, and 60 % never told a family member.

Data from this survey and others demonstrate clearly that school policies, curriculum, resources and support need to be more inclusive of LGBT students.

Student involvement in LGBT bullying and harassment prevention helps support LGBT students through a school environment that fosters respect and acceptance for all. Strategies include: formation of [Gay-Straight Alliances](#) and participating in events like the [National Day of Silence](#) and local community awareness events.

The following is an opportunity organized by the Youth Suicide Prevention Project at Berkshire AHEC. Click on

image below to go to their website.

SAVE THE DATE!
LGBTQAI+
LIVE OUT LOUD
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

April 25, 2015

**MCLA Church St. Center
375 Church St. North Adams, MA**

Registration Opens: March 1st

\$40 for those seeking professional credit \$15 voluntary donation, all others

Share My Lesson's Annual Idea's & Innovations Virtual Conference

Share My Lesson, a free web platform for teachers by teachers that encourages sharing and inspiration, hosted its [3rd Annual Ideas & Innovations Virtual Conference](#) this past March 23 - 25th. This professional learning conference is **still available** to you as on-demand prerecorded presentations. There is something for every educator, PreK - 12, in every subject area.

The broad range of topics are brought to you from the Center for Civic Education, the National School Climate Center, PBS Learning Media and many more.

Daisy Lopez from the [National School Climate Center](#) presented a manageable one hour lesson titled *Supporting Youth-Adult Partnerships: Lessons in Encouraging Upstander Behavior*,

which provides the participant with a knowledge of what a youth-adult partnership looks like and challenges educators to find more ways to incorporate youth in making decisions or leading within the classroom and the school.

Anderson Williams' research shows reframing how we see students, from recipients of knowledge to partners in learning, can empower them. This [continuum of youth involvement](#) shows the crucial progressions from participation to student voice to lead-

ership and ultimately to true engagement as upstanders

A resource link within the webcast session brings you to numerous activity, toolkit and video links and downloads to support the session topic and your work in your classroom.

All conference sessions include a certificate of professional development hours available for minimal session requirements, such as completing 30 minutes of viewing and participating in the polls.



Random Acts of Kindness Foundation



The aim of the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#) (RAK) is to help schools build and sustain a positive school environment as well as support students' social emotional development. Social emotional learning (SEL) has been shown to have a positive effect for students. Teaching kindness is one way to support social emotional development and address state and forthcoming national SEL standards. The RAK website offers you easily downloaded lesson plans and project ideas for your class or school. You can view inspirational videos showing students employing kindness in their com-

munities and get some ideas on how to create a culture of kindness in your classroom. RAK inspires Kindness Clubs around the country, and you can download the 10 step guide to start your own. These clubs began in colleges and universities but now are emerging at middle schools. Club information can be found on the website's interactive map. Will your school be the first elementary school on the map?

In 2014, RAK offered the online Social & Emotional Learning Through Kindness in the Classroom course, a 30 hour, 9 unit curriculum completed in 10 weeks earning participants C.E.U.s at a cost of \$70.00. The course content is being turned into a MOOC, and will be available in the summer of 2016. Go to the website and sign up for their free newsletter so you won't miss out when they announce it is available. Research shows that becoming mindful about doing acts of kindness and awareness of feelings of

gratitude increase happiness in both children and adults.

An [article](#) by Marilyn Price-Mitchell in Psychology Today highlights simple steps to create a culture of kindness to increase happiness. This and other links to articles and research are an example of what visiting RAK can provide.



Berkshire District Attorney's Office Education and Training Programs

Now booking K-12, staff, teacher and parent trainings on a variety of positive behavior, wellness and safety topics for the 2015 - 16 school year. Topics described on the Office website under Educational Initiatives:
<http://www.mass.gov/berkshireda>

Peer Leadership Program Kicks Off Fall 2015

The program begins in mid-September. For more information please contact Carol Mulcahy, Director of Community Outreach & Education, at 443-5951.

Emotional Intelligence in the Classroom

Daniel Goleman, author of the 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence (EI)* and the co-founder of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (www.casel.org), co-directs the [Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations](http://www.casel.org) at Rutgers University. Goleman's research and publications brought a shift into education to incorporate SEL.

When learning is guided with high EI, students begin to recognize their own source of distractions. Classrooms that highlight EI, allow children to learn to manage feelings of anger, disappointment or shame that might otherwise push them to hurt one another. They

learn how to be more empathetic and build positive relationships. These skills strengthen the emotional climate of the classroom and reduce incidence and severity of conflicts.

There are many resources online to strengthen your knowledge and bring EI to your classroom.



At Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence, researchers continue to study EI and support educators that use the RULER, evidence-based approach.

While this program training is quite costly, the website provides a lot of research in the area of EI.



www.6seconds.org is a global network supporting people to create positive change. There are numerous free resources for yourself as an individual as well as an educator, including: assessments, training, grants, resources, data and a community of support.

Resources



Project Happiness Curriculum helps students learn, manage emotions and increase empathy. This Common Core aligned curriculum is available on a sliding scale as low as \$50.00, with one free lesson available to everyone.



The Jigsaw Classroom is a research-based cooperative learning technique that reduces conflict and increases edu-

cational outcomes such as improved test performance, reduced absenteeism, as a greater liking for school.



Building Common Ground: Discussions of Community, Civility and Compassion is a collaboration of the American Library Association and the Fetzer Institute. The goal of this project is to engage the public in discussions of the importance of community, civility and compassion in their daily lives.



FREE K-12 Lesson Plans to teach kindness in the classroom. Research shows that students who learn in a positive environment have a better school experience. Visit : www.randomactsofkindness.org

Additional Online Resources

www.common sense media.org—Digital literacy and citizenship resources for educators as well as many parent resources.

www.ConnectSafely.org—Social media safety tips for teens and parents, the latest teen tech news and many other resources.

www.cybertipline.com—(1-800-THE-LOST)—Resource to report cybercrimes.

www.facinghistory.org—Civic responsibility, tolerance, and social action resources for educators.



www.net smartz.org—The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) Internet Safety resource and education program targeting children K—12, parents and educators.

www.pacer kids against bullying.org—Multiple classroom toolkits for all grade levels.

www.stopbullying.gov—Official US Government website devoted to bullying prevention.

www.stopbullyingnow.com—Author and educator Stan Davis' website to help adults prevent bullying.

The District Attorney's **Community Outreach and Education Program** works in partnership with schools, offering educational and enrichment programs which address the pressing social, legal, safety, and health issues facing schools, students and families.

For information on student, school staff and parent presentations call the District Attorney's Office at 413-443-5951.